

him stateless for many years. And in China, broadcasts of Enes' basketball games were banned after he criticized the Chinese Communist Party's repressive regime and their human rights abuses against the Uighurs and Tibetans.

Since facing backlash, Enes has made it his life's mission to push the boundaries of what is possible on and off the court. He understands and recognizes using his voice and the importance of it.

After waiting six long years, Mr. Speaker, last week Enes finally became a U.S. citizen, and at his citizenship ceremony, he recited the oath using his newly minted last name, Freedom. And I cannot think of a more appropriate new last name for Enes, as he embodies all that freedom means. And by changing his last name, Enes can now carry that word with him wherever he goes.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the brave work of Enes Kanter Freedom. At a time when others remain silent, he has spoken up.

I congratulate Enes on his citizenship, and this United States Congress and all of us welcome him to our American family.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION MITIGATING OPTIONS AND TECHNICAL EXTENSIONS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5545) to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID-19 pandemic, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5545

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions Act" or the "REMOTE Act".

SEC. 2. EXTENSIONS OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF LAW RELATING TO BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

(a) EXTENSION OF STUDENT VETERAN CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT OF 2020.—Section 2 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140; 38 U.S.C. 3031 note), as amended by section 5202(a) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2020 (Division E of Public Law 116-159), is further amended by

striking "December 21, 2021" and inserting "June 1, 2022".

(b) EXTENSION OF PERIOD FOR CONTINUATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION CONVERTED TO DISTANCE LEARNING BY REASON OF EMERGENCIES AND HEALTH-RELATED SITUATIONS.—Section 1(b) of Public Law 116-128 (38 U.S.C. 3001 note prec.), as amended by section 5202(b) of the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2020 (Division E of Public Law 116-159), is further amended by striking "December 21, 2021" and inserting "June 1, 2022".

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) WAIVER OF VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT FOR CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—Section 3313(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the requirements of this subsection for an educational institution that the Secretary has determined uses a flat tuition and fee structure that would make the use of a second verification under this subsection unnecessary."

(b) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORITY TO DISAPPROVE OF COURSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(i) by inserting "except for the recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal student assistance" after "assistance"; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) In determining whether a violation of subparagraph (B) has occurred, the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the place of the State approving agency, shall construe the requirements of this paragraph in accordance with the regulations and guidance prescribed by the Secretary of Education under section 487(a)(20) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)(20)).";

(B) by redesignating paragraph (7) as paragraph (8); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following new paragraph (7):

"(7) This subsection shall not apply to an educational institution—

"(A) located in a foreign country; or

"(B) that provides to a covered individual consumer information regarding costs of the program of education (including financial aid available to such covered individual) using a form or template developed by the Secretary of Education."

(2) APPLICATION DATE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not carry out subsection (f) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, until August 1, 2022, except that, beginning on June 15, 2022, an educational institution may submit an application for a waiver under paragraph (5) of such subsection.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (c) of section 3696 of such title is amended—

(A) by inserting "(1)" before "An educational";

(B) by inserting "except for the recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal student assistance" after "assistance"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) In determining whether a violation of paragraph (1) has occurred, the Under Sec-

retary for Benefits shall construe the requirements of this paragraph in accordance with the regulations and guidance prescribed by the Secretary of Education under section 487(a)(20) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)(20))."

(c) EXEMPTION OF FOREIGN SCHOOLS FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) INFORMATION RELATING TO TESTS.—Section 3689(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) Subparagraph (G) of paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to an educational institution located in a foreign country."

(2) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS.—Section 3690(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking "Notwithstanding" and inserting "(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), notwithstanding"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to the records and accounts—

"(A) of an educational institution located in a foreign country; and

"(B) that pertain to an individual who is not receiving educational assistance under this chapter."

SEC. 4. PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WHO ARE "ROUNDING OUT" UNDER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), in the matter before subparagraph (A), by striking "in paragraph (2)" and inserting "in paragraphs (2) and (3)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the case of an eligible veteran or eligible person who is pursuing a program of education on less than a half-time basis during a period that is the last semester, term, or academic period the veteran or person will be enrolled in the program of education because the veteran or person will complete the program of education at the end of that semester, term, or academic period, the Secretary may, pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe, provide to the veteran or person educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title or under chapter 1606 of title 10, including a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313(c) of this title, on the basis of the total number of credits or courses in which the veteran or person is enrolled, if—

"(A) the number of credits the veteran or person needs to complete the program of education is less than the number of credits that would constitute enrollment on a more than half-time basis for that last semester, term, or academic period; and

"(B) the veteran or person—

"(i) is enrolled in, or has completed, every course offered by the program of education during the last semester, term, or academic period in which the veteran or person is enrolled in the program of education; and

"(ii) enrolls in an additional course that is not required for the completion of such program of education and the enrollment in the non-required course in addition to the required course or courses in which the veteran or person is enrolled constitutes enrollment on more than a half-time basis."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on January 1, 2022, and apply with respect to any semester, term, or academic period that begins on or after that date.

SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF RELIEF RELATING TO VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) EXTENSION OF MODIFICATION OF TIME LIMITATIONS ON USE OF ENTITLEMENT TO MONTGOMERY GI BILL AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND TRAINING.—Section 1105 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-315) is amended by striking “December 21, 2021” each place it appears and inserting “June 1, 2022”.

(b) EXTENSION OF CONTINUATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY.—Section 1102(e) of such Act is amended by striking “December 21, 2021” and inserting “June 1, 2022”.

(c) EXTENSION OF PROVISIONS RELATING TO EFFECTS OF CLOSURE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND MODIFICATION OF COURSES BY REASON OF COVID-19 EMERGENCY.—Section 1103(h) of such Act is amended by striking “December 21, 2021” and inserting “June 1, 2022”.

(d) EXTENSION OF PROVISION RELATING TO PAYMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN CASES OF WITHDRAWAL.—Section 1104(a) of such Act is amended by striking “December 21, 2021” and inserting “June 1, 2022”.

(e) EXTENSION OF PROVISION RELATING TO APPRENTICESHIP OR ON-JOB TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.—Section 1106(b) of such Act is amended by striking “December 21, 2021” and inserting “June 1, 2022”.

(f) EXTENSION OF PAYMENT OF WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCES DURING EMERGENCY SITUATION.—Section 3 of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-140; 38 U.S.C. 3485 note) is amended by striking “During the covered period” and inserting “During the period beginning on March 1, 2020, and ending on June 1, 2022”.

SEC. 6. ADJUSTMENTS OF CERTAIN LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “October 1, 2030” each place it appears and inserting “January 14, 2031”.

SEC. 7. ELIMINATION OF CAP ON FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WHO PROVIDE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COUNSELING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 516 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

- (1) by striking subsection (g); and
- (2) by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (g).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding the effect of the amendment under subsection (a).

SEC. 8. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 5545, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5545, as amended, the Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions Act, or the REMOTE Act. This bill is an urgent extension of flexibilities for student veterans using their educational assistance benefits as the COVID-19 pandemic wears on.

H.R. 5545, as amended, extends the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 through the spring 2022 term.

When my Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law in April 2020, I am not sure many of us would have foreseen that 19 months later the COVID-19 pandemic would still affect everyday life for veterans and their families across the country.

And since then, we have extended these flexibilities for student veterans three times as the pandemic remains a public health emergency throughout the country and the world. Still, many college students remain unable to return to campus.

H.R. 5545, as amended, would extend remote learning waivers for student veterans through the spring 2022 term and ensure they will continue receiving full housing benefits despite not taking on-campus courses.

We have been negotiating this bill with the minority for months and, while this bill is not the exact version that I would prefer, student veterans are simply too important to let these benefits lapse.

A majority of students have already enrolled in their spring classes, having signed up as early as this past October or November. They selected their classes with the hope that we, in Congress, would act to extend these flexibilities through the spring term. We cannot wait any longer to pass this critical piece of legislation for our student veterans.

New cases of the virus are up. There is a new variant, leading some States to declare a new state of emergency, and it is clear, COVID-19 is not behind us. The emergency persists, and we cannot walk away from our duty to assist student veterans now.

Without this legislation, student veterans who planned and started out the school year remotely—reasonably thinking they would be able to stay in status for the entire school year—will have to figure out a plan to get back to taking on-campus classes in order to receive their monthly allowance for housing.

This legislation is to address this specific emergency now. This is not

setting precedent for any future emergencies, nor is it setting a standard for treating future education terms impacted by COVID-19.

Should we have to extend these provisions again next year, we should use the same emergency designations we have used three times in the past. We know these provisions are not for new benefits. They are to maintain existing benefits and existing spending.

Additionally, this bill ensures student bodies at U.S. universities remain diverse and allows for the continued recruitment of foreign students. It also simplifies the verification process for tuition reimbursement for certain educational institutions to minimize unneeded paperwork for student veterans.

Student veterans should be able to focus on their studies, not on whether they are going to receive their earned VA benefits. And that is why I introduced this bill, with my House Veterans' Affairs Committee colleagues, Representative TRONE and Representative MIKE LEVIN, to ease the burden on student veterans during these persistently uncertain times.

Now, this legislation is endorsed by numerous VSOs, such as the Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, the VFW, American Council on Education, Tragedy Assistance for Survivors, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators, and countless others.

Finally, the legislation includes an additional provision from Representatives LAMB and MANN. The text of this section of the bill would help the Department address diversity and equity within the workforce. It removes a 1997 law that limits the number of VA counselors who can advise employees on equal employment opportunity issues.

VA has roughly doubled in size since 1997, and VA requested for this limit to be removed to allow the Department to hire additional counselors to support the needs of a growing workforce and help ensure that VA is a welcoming place for all employees.

I wish to thank Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER for bringing this legislation to the floor; and I urge the rest of my colleagues to support this legislation to ensure student veterans are able to access the benefits they have earned and continue their studies during the spring semester.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5545, as amended, the REMOTE Act. I am pleased to support this bill, which is very similar to my bill, H.R. 5509, the Student Veteran COVID-19 Protection Act of 2021. This bill will help address urgent needs of student veterans who are impacted by COVID-19.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Congress worked to ensure that student veterans' GI bill housing allowance payments were not cut when in-person classes were moved online.

The current authorization for this protection expires on December 21, 2021. H.R. 5545, as amended, would extend it through June 1 of 2021. This would provide veterans and schools with the certainty that students will not see a reduction in their monthly housing checks this school year.

The bill also includes changes to ensure that GI bill students can attend foreign schools and give American schools time to comply with new consumer protection rules.

It includes a change to the VA's rounding-out policy to allow students to retain their full monthly housing allowance, even if they finish their program-required coursework early.

Finally, it also includes language sponsored by Congressman LAMB and Congressman MANN to remove the cap on the equal employment opportunity counselors at the VA. There is no place for discrimination at the VA. I am pleased that we can, once again, pass this important provision to help employees avail themselves of their right for a safe workplace.

The costs of this bill are fully paid for by extending current VA home loan funding fees for a few months into 2030. This is a bipartisan offset that has been used multiple times in previous Congresses.

This issue of whether to offset the estimated \$220 million mandatory costs associated with this bill has been an issue of disagreement for many weeks, and I want to thank Chairman TAKANO for working with me and finding a mutually beneficial solution that is paid for and can quickly pass the Senate. This is win for the veterans, schools, and taxpayers alike.

□ 1030

In the vast majority of circumstances, I strongly believe that Congress should do our job and pay for this new spending. We have a responsibility to pay for our bills, just like every American does. However, that does not mean that I will not consider the use of emergency spending when it is appropriate and necessary in the future as new emergencies may arise.

Before I close, I would like to thank the dozens of higher education groups and veterans service organizations that have advocated for the passage of this needed extension and reform.

I want to especially thank the American Council on Education and the Student Veterans of America for their continued support for this fully paid for legislation. They understand that if these changes are not made soon, many schools will be forced to stop accepting students who are using the GI Bill. I agree with them that such an outcome is simply unacceptable.

While I wish we could have enacted these protections weeks ago, I am glad we are taking care of them today on a bipartisan basis that protects veterans and taxpayers alike.

I, again, want to thank Chairman TAKANO for working with me and oth-

ers on this issue, as well as our colleagues, Senators TESTER and MORAN, for their support.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE), my good friend and the author of H.R. 5545, as amended. He is a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and an active member on the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our bill, the REMOTE Learning Act, to protect veterans' education benefits.

Last year, Congress prevented cuts to veterans' tuition payments as students transitioned to online learning. This helped folks stay in school during the pandemic, which remains one of the most challenging times to pursue higher education.

Unfortunately, these benefits are at risk once again. By law, the Department of Veterans Affairs is required to cut housing benefits for student veterans who are taking classes remotely. This doesn't make sense during a global pandemic.

While some colleges and professors have chosen to keep classes remote, many student veterans have opted to live on campus. We need to act now to ensure our veterans receive the necessary flexibility to achieve academic success.

The REMOTE Learning Act will extend remote learning waivers, ensure veterans receive full housing benefits, allow universities to continue recruiting foreign students so that student bodies can remain diverse, and minimize paperwork for tuition reimbursement.

Our veterans deserve a world-class education. They deserve to earn their degrees on time. Some of these brave servicemembers have waited their whole lives to get their degrees. The negative effects of the pandemic shouldn't hinder them from doing that. We have a responsibility to help.

I want to thank Chairman TAKANO and Chairman LEVIN for their leadership on this bill and for all the hard work they have done to protect our veterans. It is time to pass this bill and give the veterans the benefits they have earned.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to let everyone know that I am very much in support of this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support it as well, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work and cooperation of the ranking member, and I appreciate that he stands squarely behind this legislation.

What is at stake at the very end of this year is the housing of our Nation's

student veterans, numbering in the tens of thousands. We need swift passage of this bill and the companion bill in the Senate.

I urge all Members of the House to support this bill, and I urge our Senate colleagues to act on this expeditiously.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5545, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5545, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to extend certain expiring provisions of law relating to benefits provided under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs during COVID-19 pandemic, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NASA ENHANCED USE LEASING EXTENSION ACT OF 2021

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5746) to amend title 51, United States Code, to extend the authority of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to enter into leases of non-excess property of the Administration, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5746

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "NASA Enhanced Use Leasing Extension Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress find the following:

(1) NASA uses enhanced use leasing to enter into agreements with private sector entities, State and local governments, academic institutions, and other Federal agencies for lease of non-excess, underutilized NASA properties and facilities.

(2) NASA uses enhanced use leasing authority to support responsible management of its real property, including to improve the use of underutilized property for activities that are compatible with NASA's mission and to reduce facility operating and maintenance costs.

(3) In fiscal year 2019, under its enhanced use lease authority, NASA leased 65 real properties.

(4) In fiscal year 2019, NASA's use of enhanced use leasing resulted in the collection of \$10,843,025.77 in net revenue.

(5) In fiscal year 2019, NASA used a portion of its enhanced use leasing revenues for repairs of facility control systems such as lighting and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

(6) NASA's use of enhanced use leasing authority can contribute to reducing the rate of increase of the Agency's overall deferred maintenance cost.